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# The Role of the Acquisitions Editor in University Press Publishing

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Emily M. Garman entitled "The Role of the Acquisitions Editor in University Press Publishing." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication.

Mark Littmann, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Dorothy Bowles, James Crook

Accepted for the Council:
Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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# The Role of the Acquisitions Editor in University Press Publishing

A Thesis
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Master of Science
Degree
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Emily M. Garman
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## Abstract

This study examines the changing role of acquisitions editors within university presses. The various factors that contribute to the changing role of acquisitions editors were examined through personal interviews of twenty-nine acquisitions editors from university presses across the United States. Twenty questions were presented to the editors on editorial responsibilities, book marketing, electronic publishing, education and job training, and author/editor relationships. This study concentrated on those questions, as well as on the evolving role of acquisitions editors when affected by variables such as library acquisitions, financial trends, electronic publishing, and rules for professorial tenure that affect changes in scholarly publishing.

The study concluded that acquisitions editors still gain most of their training through job experience, although many more outlets exist now for education than were offered twenty years ago. The editors indicated that business and financial training would be helpful because of the constraints placed on scholarly publishing due to decreased university subsidies and declining sales to libraries. When acquiring manuscripts, editors use a network of scholars and authors who serve as expert advisers when evaluating scholarship in particular fields. The scholarship acquired by acquisitions editors should support the press' mission to publish the best research available.

Acquisitions editors must consider the manuscript's potential sales, implying its appeal to the broadest possible audience, when deciding whether to publish, thus affecting the types of manuscripts they acquire. In order to recover revenue lost in publishing traditional, narrowly focused monographs and from a decrease in university

subsidy, editors must balance their lists with monographs that reach the broadest possible audience of scholars and with trade books that will reach a general audience. Most editors compete with other university presses for the most desirable scholarship by allowing multiple submissions from senior scholars and from those facing a tenure deadline. The editors acknowledge that electronic publishing may become a foundation of scholarly publishing in the future; however, currently there is not a high demand for electronic books, nor is there an established system to regulate the purchase of a book placed on the Internet. Some presses are experimenting with various electronic procedures, while others are waiting for the questions to be resolved.

# Table of Contents

# CHAPTER 1
# LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of acquisitions editor within university publishing appears to be changing in order to accommodate transformations taking place in the industry. To study the changing role of acquisitions editors, a review of the history of university presses and the current trends within the industry must be completed to provide a framework on which to base evaluations of the role of an acquisitions editor. The Association of American University Presses (AAUP, 2003) states the mission of university presses is to make available to the public research of scholarly, intellectual, and creative merit; to preserve the distinctiveness of local cultures through works on the regional issues surrounding most of the presses; to sponsor work in specialized and emerging areas of scholarship; to test the validity and soundness of high standards of scholarship; to present a diversity of scholarly perspectives; to encourage the work of younger scholars; and to promote the influence of the parent institution. The role of an acquisitions editor revolves around promoting this mission and its values.

## The Cold War's Effect on University Presses

The oldest continuously operating university press in the United States is The Johns Hopkins University Press, founded in 1878, only two years after the university opened its doors to students. Daniel Coit Gilman, the founder of both the university and its press, declared, "It is one of the noblest duties of a university to advance knowledge, and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures—but far and wide" (Givler, 2002, p. 108). His now-famous dictum conveys the clear, specific role of

university presses. Gilman was not the only president of a university to establish a university press: the presidents at the University of Chicago and Columbia University also founded their university presses with the intention of being centers for the transmission of new knowledge. This knowledge was the product of research conducted by scholars in libraries and laboratories; it was then to be shared through a system of dissemination (Givler, 2002, p. 109).

The space age of the 1960s sparked a boom in the economy, in science research, and ultimately in the publishing of this information. That boom emerged from a political bust. In late 1957, the Soviet *Sputnik*, the first manmade satellite in orbit, marked a great achievement for the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War and left the Western political and scientific bureaucracy embarrassed and envious of the Soviet success. A series of reports written to the president and to Congress blamed the inadequacy of science information and education in the United States. The role of information was tied to the productivity of research. As a result, financial support for research organizations, publishers of new scholarship, higher education, and new facilities poured forth from the government (Henderson, 2002, p. 151).

However, in the late 1970s and 1980s, as the Cold War was coming to an end, a shift in Congressional priorities led to a decrease in government funding for research institutions. Reduced funds at universities marked the beginning of a slow decline in the purchase of scholarly monographs by libraries. Libraries are an important scholarly market for university presses; they buy the largest number of university press books (Persell, 1985, p. 46-48). Yet during this time, library budgets shrank, leaving less

money for the purchase of scholarly publications and thereby affecting the revenues of university presses (Givler, 2002, p. 111).

Additionally, university presses saw less money available to buy new manuscripts and to print new publications because parent universities reduced their direct funding to presses in the form of operating subsidies. This austerity forced university presses to seek new forms of funding, either through other subsidies from foundations, government agencies, and private donors that would give direct support to scholarly monographs or by publishing books that would fit into a more lucrative market, resulting in indirect support for monographs through new sources of revenue that would then be used to cover the losses from scholarly publishing (Givler, 2002, p. 112; Topkis, 1985, p. 71).

## The Crisis of the Monograph

University presses labeled this decline in government funding during in the 1970s "the crisis of the monograph." The term refers to the drying up of resources to publish intensive studies of narrow but worthwhile subjects, forcing increased investments in trend-driven publishing. A monograph is a book that lacks crossover sales potential. A crossover book is a work of scholarship that also sells in a nonacademic market or is adopted as a required text in an undergraduate course (Wissoker, 1997, p. B5).

There is much disagreement within university publishing and the scholars of these institutions about whether there is actually a crisis to address. To resolve these debates, in 1983 a committee made up of Modern Language Association members formed to investigate and understand the alleged crisis in scholarly publishing and make recommendations to address the situation.

The committee determined library budgets declined for monographs in the humanities in the 1970s as governmental subsidies decreased and overhead costs for university presses rose, placing pressure on publishers to make profit-based decisions. In addition, parent universities withdrew a percentage of their subsidies to their presses. As a result, important scholarly series were reevaluated and often dropped from the publishing list. General-usage texts now form a larger and larger percentage of what presses desire to publish. University presses are moving away from heavy reliance on specialized texts and moving toward a mixture of books with a wide market and crossover appeal as well as scholarly depth (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the future of scholarly publishing, 2002, p. 172-75).

By the end of the twentieth century, the market for books rapidly changed as presses adopted commercial management techniques, acquired titles with a broader sales appeal, and reduced the size of lists that habitually failed to make up production costs (Parsons, 1989, p. 122). Everyone is part of the potential market as all people have become consumers of information. However, publishers still sell works of a scholarly nature at a much higher price than the general reader is willing to pay, therefore reducing the monograph market solely to libraries and a few scholars willing to pay for scholarship in their field. This practice is operationally what the industry means by scholarly publishing: it is books of scholarly issues directed to segmented audiences (Horowitz, 1991, p. 39).

## Crossover Appeal

Sales in scholarly monographs with a narrow focus declined during the 1980s while the acquisitions editors of university presses actively sought out books that crossed

several disciplinary lines. Presses now have more diverse and wide-ranging lists than a few years ago. Some publishers are creating internal cross subsidy by publishing books that sell well to finance those that do not (Baker, 1998, p. 38). William Dowling, an eighteenth century literary scholar, says he believes one way presses are broaching this crossover appeal is by creating lists in cultural studies, and the quasi-autobiographical mode has become the hallmark of writing in cultural studies. These studies tend to be sensationalistic because of social trends in the culture. For example, *Barbie's Queer Accessories* (1995) is a book written by Erica Rand of Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and published by Duke University Press. It explores her personal childhood experiences with Barbie dolls and the reaction to Barbie by other women within lesbian society. The proven success of cultural studies books is seen in sales at New York University Press, which doubled in the four years after the introduction of a cultural studies list (1997, p. 24-25). Then again, the appeal to a new market of general readers may not be such a bad tradeoff, as reaching out to the general public is an important objective of most universities (Givler, 1999, p. 110).

Ken Wissoker, editor in chief at Duke University Press, agrees with Dowling's finding that decisions at university presses are increasingly based on market factors instead of intellectual ones, but points out that the presses under consideration have greatly increased the number of publications since 1982, the fifteen-year period he studied. Wissoker finds that there may be room for culturally informed works as well as scholarly monographs. In 1996, Duke published three times the number of books it did in the early '80s and increased the number of monographs it published as well (1997, p. B4).

University presses are also experimenting with books on regional topics to build revenue. Regional books look to the folklore, geography, history, and special attributes of the region (Rosenthal, 1985, p. 347). Nicholas Pfund, a director of the New York University Press, presents a clear case for the shifting publication habits of scholarly presses, "I'm just not interested on an intellectual level in figuring out how to publish tremendously esoteric texts. What I want are books that people read, that deal with subjects that are of interest to a range of people. That entails a willingness occasionally to say it's not our responsibility to publish a book, no matter how good, if it's going to lose a lot of money" (Dowling, 1997, p. 33).

Recently university presses are utilizing print-on-demand publishing as a partial solution to the crisis of the monograph. In 1997, Ingram Book Company, a major book distributor, launched on-demand printing, calling its new program Lightning Source. Using new high-quality photocopying, Ingram could print books only when requested by the publisher. Print-on-demand publishing is available to all presses that are willing to pay for Ingram's services. On-demand printing allows university presses to publish a manuscript that may not sell many copies, usually because of its narrow topic. The press will print books on an "as needed" basis, reducing the costs of storing the inventory. University presses are finding the costs for Ingram's Lightning Source are less than the costs of a normal print run. On-demand printing also allows out-of-print books to be brought back into print inexpensively (Adams, 2002, p. 37; Oda, 2002, p. 64).

Solutions to the supposed crisis of the monograph vary in the approach to revenue building, and among these solutions is a small press revolution, not in the total dollar amount of revenue, but in the types of books being published. While small presses are

capturing the titles that larger university presses and commercial publishers turn down, they are building significant lists in specific areas. ELT Press grew out of the journal *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920,* and it now publishes humanities manuscripts from this time period. The press is located at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and is a micro-university press created by Robert Langenfeld, professor of English, to complement the journal. The initial money to start the press was a personal investment by the founders. Langenfeld acts as the editor in chief and the business manager for the press. The manuscripts he acquires are evaluated by two scholars of the ELT's advisory board. As business manager, he determines the print run and oversees the marketing of each book. The press employs graduate assistants who receive a stipend from the university, so the press does not have to pay their salaries. The students are responsible for copy editing, jacket copy, and general administrative duties. The press pays for the supplies and operating expenses through the revenues of the two books per year it publishers. There are also no expenses for inventory as the press uses the system of print-on-demand. The English Department provides office space, mailing expenses and the graduate assistants. This innovative press might possibly be part of the solution to the problem of decreasing numbers of humanities monographs being published (Langenfeld, 1997, p. 1-4).

## Another Contributor of Change

The reduction in federal grants to university presses and print-on-demand were not the only element that changed the way university presses operated. In the early 1970s, computers entered the publishing scene. They were first used for record keeping, and then their use expanded to database collections. With the advent of new

technologies, the role of scholarly book publishers may become less critical to the dissemination of knowledge. Academics can take a more active role in the dissemination of scholarship by independently publishing their books online without the utilization of a publisher. Information stored online presents findings to the general public as well as to scholars, but a critical approach must be used when seeking it out and determining its merit based on the reputation of the author and the peer review process his/her scholarship has undergone (Horowitz, 1991, p. 49-51).

During the last ten years, the Internet has transformed publishing. Whether information is in print or on the Internet, important roles of publishers/editors include helping weed out good information from bad, putting it in a form most useful to readers, and getting it into the hands of the people who are likely to be interested in it. Because of technology, acquisitions editors are reevaluating ideas on textual authority, accessibility, stability, and preservation by creating a new scholarly infrastructure with tools that will cite, catalogue, identify, and number electronic texts (Givler, 2002, p. 117).

The subject of electronic publishing raises many questions and problems concerning its integration into the university publishing industry. First, does it actually reduce costs of publishing connected to the editing process? The electronic book readers and software programs needed to read electronic books (e-books) on personal computers have not been standardized, making different systems incompatible. There also are no digital storage mechanisms for the individual who wishes to download an e-book. Additionally, an important process within scholarly publishing is the review of manuscripts by peer scholars, a tradition not standardized yet in electronic publishing. Scholars have the capacity to place their books online without undergoing the review

process, claiming it is legitimate scholarship. The price charged for electronic books is also not standardized. While one press may charge a significant fee to view the book electronically, another may allow readers to view an electronic book for free. And finally, there is a growing fear that large conglomerates will own and operate the content of electronic sources (MLA Ad Hoc Committee, 2002, p. 180).

The question of how to incorporate the traditional steps of manuscript publication, which are the foundation of scholarly publishing—editorial development, peer review, author revision, copy editing, and design—into online publication presently override the apparent advantages. If scholars will not accept the online information as worthy and scholarly, which will likely to occur without the necessary scholarly peer reviews, the author has written in vain. The same steps of gatekeeping, editorial selection and peer review, enhancement of readability, copy editing, proofreading, design, and marketing must be incorporated into electronic book publishing if it is to be successful. Additionally, how will the publisher make the appropriate readers aware of the publication's existence? As the number of online books increases, this marketing process can be just as costly, time-consuming, and complex as online publishing itself (Freeman, 1993, p. A44).

In the continuing debate about electronic publishing, some believe that placing scholarly work in an electronic format and making it accessible over a computer network may prove less expensive to the printing costs, but the low-cost electronic version is not equal to the quality control of peer reviews that would give the manuscripts full respectability (Ekman, 1996, p. 36-37). Thomas DeLoughry, a reporter for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, wrote that one way electronic publishing enhances

scholarly publication is by linking the material, when placed in an electronic format, to the visual material of reference documents, images, and other resources available on a computer network (1993, p. A17). Another consideration in adapting to new technologies is the size of the press. It might be difficult for smaller press to update equipment, staff, and training for electronic publishing (Ekman, 1996, p. 39).

## Adapted Education

As university publishing was altering the types of books editors acquired to reduce revenue loss and computers were being integrated into the workplace, the type of education acquisitions editors received shifted as well. During the early era of university publishing, at the beginning of the 20th century, acquisitions editors received training through a formal apprenticeship. However, by the end of the century, these apprenticeships had shifted to a formal education, including training in business, finance, organizational management, writing, and editing (Curtain, 1997, p. 187).

Traditional publishing had been marked by the individuality of approaches by acquisitions editors: the presses encouraged loyalty, long service, quality of scholarship, and a house method of publishing. Modern publishing focuses on the bottom line and return on funds invested in addition to the quality of scholarship. Thus educational requirements changed, and employees were brought in from outside professions to provide generic skills in marketing and finance while knowledgeable marketing and finance staff shifted from one press to another. Acquisitions editors moved from press to press too. The result was a homogenized publishing industry because of increased job mobility and sharing of publishing systems. Staff can now be trained for an industry rather than a specific press. Post-graduate programs and short courses were organized for

training in the specific needs of publishing, electronic distribution, and communications. Both new employees and those already in the industry needed updated training (Curtain, 1997, p. 188-90).

A contemporary complaint is that conditions in publishing have changed in the last few decades, and acquisitions editors in the 1990s are not being trained with the same thoroughness as in the first half of the century. In the past, acquisitions editors were trained as copy editors; now entrants are hired as editorial assistants, thus obtaining skills directly related to acquiring manuscripts. Presses have created separate copy editing divisions, making the modern training of editorial assistants necessary for acquisitions. The skills needed to be a proficient acquisitions editor include pitching projects to colleagues, managing editor/author relations, finding and keeping authors, and knowing market and research trends. Editors also need to plan strategically for list building, tie the lists into the press' objectives, and learn technological changes within the industry (Macleod, 1997, p. 193).

Since the 1970s, formal education programs for careers in publishing have been created. The programs, however, seem to be geared toward copy editors and managing editors, with very little training for acquisitions. Scholarly houses in the past relied on editors' academic backgrounds or their informal but detailed knowledge of a particular field. Now the trend is to hire young graduates as assistants to acquisitions editors. Those who have been trained as copy editors have a different set of skills from those hired directly for an acquisitions position. Copy editors seem to be more interested in the specifics of enhancing a manuscript, while those hired directly into acquisitions roles seem to be interested in how the project works with other departments while moving

through the entire publishing process. The changes in education are based on changes within the industry as scholarly publishing becomes more fiscally accountable. Within the past few decades, publishers have increasingly farmed out copy editing to freelancers. Thus few presses still have in-house copy editors from which to draw acquisitions staff, even if the skills were transferable (Macleod, 1997, p. 194-96).

New technologies now are forcing publishers to be educated in another component of publishing and to rethink the nature of the business. The new challenge is balancing the opportunities of new technologies with the traditions of book publishing, which has a significant effect on the requirements of education and training for publishing (Curtain, 1997, p. 188). Therefore, within the last decade, new education strategies have generated the concept of mid-career education programs for acquisitions editors need training in essential business and technology skills. In order to provide training for mid-career professionals, the Association of American University Presses designed a job-sharing, mentoring week-in-residence program for experienced staff of the press, including editors. The participants of the American Association of University Presses' program are placed at another university press to exchange ideas and strategies that benefit both the visiting publisher and the host press. This program offers integral professional training within the industry for publishers who have surpassed basic instruction from workshops at annual conferences. It serves many purposes, from learning about new book-making technology, to electronic publishing implementations, to learning from senior colleagues (Dellwo, 1997, p. 241-42).

## Acquisitions Editors Shape University Presses

While one university press may choose to publish more regional or cultural books, another may publish mostly scholarly works. These differences often reflect the choices of the editors who have built the lists and the scholars who have sat on the editorial board over the years (Topkis, 1985, p. 70). Acquisitions editors actively shape their presses' agenda by choosing the manuscripts that offer the most valuable scholarship to the specific fields of research published by each press and by using aggressive acquisitions methods. Knowledge constantly changes, and, therefore, the pursuit of knowledge must evolve as well. As scholars shift their attention from one field of study to another, new fields arise, while old ones diminish. Acquisitions editors shift their focus as new agendas emerge within certain lists and subcategories of those lists. University presses state the key to scholarly communication is publishing in an area where there exists a large enough population of interested scholars or general readers to support publication costs (Parsons, 1989, p. 131-138).

Acquisitions editors work by having a sense of a whole field or subfield. From this sense they build lists. A university press may not publish a single monograph title within the field of military history, for example, because an author does not want to stand alone on the press' list. Also, marketing people find it too difficult to research and advertise for a single work in a particular field of study. Most editors today acquire manuscripts within a few fields and then make choices based on the subfields or approaches within each area. This is called niche publishing. In order to make a profit or reach the break-even mark, most publishers will build lists in areas that are widely

reviewed or that sell well. Also, factors like the strength of the press and the notoriety of the parent institution factor into the lists built at each university (Wissoker, 1997, p. B5).

A publisher's vision is to publish, as best as possible, a well-rounded list of titles that reflects the strengths of the university as well as the full breadth of its interests, including those of the region (Parsons, 1989, p. 24; Hawes, 1967, p. 58). List building involves planning and envisioning the types of books that will be published by the press, finding and capturing opportunities for acquiring these manuscripts, and finally obtaining author contracts and completed manuscripts for these particular ideas. Responsibilities of list building traditionally have been delegated by the director of the press to specialized employees or acquisitions editors. They must combine the knowledge of financial and administrative aspects of press operations with the knowledge of research fields included in the press' list. A press acquiring a manuscript also serves as a culmination for a scholar's research and publication of their findings (Hawes, 1967, p. 60-66).

## Current Editorial Procedures

In the present state of acquisitions, a large part of an editor's job is managerial. Editors set up a system for manuscript acquisition and peer review within various academic areas, select people to operate within that system, and monitor the progress. Two important criteria for selecting editors thus become the breadth of research interests and management skills (Meier, 1997, p. 563).

Acquisitions editors use common procedures in actively encouraging manuscript proposals and acquiring completed manuscripts. Editors follow the literature in a given scholarly field and attend scholarly conferences where the findings of years of research are presented. In addition, they consult closely with advisers and top faculty within a

particular field, usually at the parent institution, about current research (Hawes, 1967, p. 61-62). The key to scholarly editing is staying informed about research developments within a field. Therefore, identifying the leading and most promising scholars and growing fields is an important responsibility of an acquisitions editor. The extent of the editor's knowledge across a broad range of subjects is the key measure of his or her skills. Editors must work at building an active network of contacts or advisers within the lists they acquire to call upon for advice on the merits and marketability of a particular project. In 1985, editors agreed that visiting university campuses and knocking on office doors was the best and most rewarding way to find manuscripts and make contacts. Today, however, editors have other priorities that take the majority of their time throughout the day, and this type of contact rarely happens (Powell, p. 73-75).

Faculty participation and interest in helping to attract proposals and manuscripts to the press and disseminating scholarship throughout their community are a great advantage to the editor. As manuscripts are sent to the press, through the influence of the university's faculty or recruitment by acquisitions editors or even without solicitation, the editor's first step in acquiring manuscripts involves screening or making a preliminary evaluation of them. Book ideas that are not actively solicited by the acquisitions editor may come to the press in the form of a query letter, occasionally including sample chapters, introduction, or outline; or more detailed manuscript proposals: or a completed manuscript. With the rise of unsolicited manuscript submissions, this preliminary evaluation involves most of the editor's time, along with finding appropriate reviewers for the work (Hawes, 1967, p. 64, 66).

Reviewers are scholars who have expertise in a particular field and usually have been published themselves on similar topics. Editors therefore must be knowledgeable about their lists and aware of the direction of research, reading all the time to keep up. Knowing that reviews ultimately place the stamp of approval on a manuscript before it is sent along in the process, the editor must perform the initial gatekeeper function of deciding what to send out to reviewers (Matocha, 1993, p. 32-33). Editors must make these screening evaluations before sending a work to outside readers so that reviewers are not reading clearly unworthy proposals or manuscripts and, in effect, wasting their time (Powell, 1985, p. 76).

Although readers are paid a small stipend, they perform the function of reviewing manuscripts more as a service to their field of study to ensure the best and most accurate research is being presented through publication. The reviewer's objective is to assess the significance and soundness of scholarly contribution; no press could obtain editors with scholarly credentials in all the lists published by the press (Hawes, 1967, p. 65). Once a book has been evaluated by editors and reviewers, the final decision to publish lies in the hands of an editorial board made up of professors appointed by the parent university. In 1967, Hawes stated that the decision of whether to publish rested on the quality of the scholarship (66). Thirty years later, university publishers not only consider the scholarship merit of a book, but also the sales and course adoption potential.

Charles East, a long-time editor at Louisiana State University Press, gives his account of a career in publishing: "When I first came to scholarly publishing I thought that the writing itself, the you-might-say literary quality of the work, together with the scholarship, of course, would be the major factor in determining whether we would

publish it. Instead I discovered very soon that . . . narrative skill and a gift for language counted, but the subject [of the manuscript] was more often the element that made the difference [in the decision for publication]" (393). Once a manuscript is chosen and its subject fits with the publishing lists of the press, East says he believes editors can have one of two roles: to form an educated opinion of the manuscript by reading it very carefully before it is sent to reviewers, or to act as a processor, only skimming it and deciding where to send it to be reviewed. He made the mistake of not reading a manuscript thoroughly before sending it to readers, and when it returned with unfavorable reviews, he discovered he would not have sent it in the first place if he had read it more carefully (394).

Another important task of acquisitions editors is to establish good relations with authors so the editors may acquire future manuscripts from those authors, use them as reviewers, and keep themselves informed about new lines of research in various disciplines (Powell, 1985, p. 73-74). Topkis (1985) agrees that academics are committed to a lifetime of researching and publishing. Scholars and libraries constitute the primary market for scholarly books, and they are the critics on whom editors depend for reviews of manuscripts. They are a major source of referrals on upcoming manuscripts, so the editor/scholar relationship must be close and long-lasting. It is an important part of the editor's job to keep it that way (73-74). In the same way acquisitions editors build relationships with reviewers, they must do the same with their authors. Many times a reviewer will become an author and vice versa.

Because of the close relationship that is formed between acquisitions editors and authors, editors can often find themselves trapped between the author's wishes

concerning the book and the desires of the press (Powell, 1985, p. 76). Acquisitions editors note that criticism given to an author is important, but the method of criticism must also be evaluated. It must be constructive and friendly to the discipline and to the scholar, and it must provide guidance. Editors must encourage the author to take advantage of the revisions suggested by the reviewers. They should intrude as a little as possible on the manuscript's concepts and impressions. Editors must help the author meet deadlines, and the editor must give clear reasons for rejection or provide the best possible support through the publishing process (Matocha, 1993, p. 34-37). An editor must also advise an author on partially completed or proposed manuscripts, as well as supervise the author's revisions proposed by peer reviews (Hawes, 1967, p. 64).

In the same way acquisitions editors have certain responsibilities to the author, the author must inform the editor if the manuscript has been submitted to another press. Within scholarly publishing, the practice of multiple submissions is gradually becoming more acceptable because of the length of time required for reviews and publication and because scholars are under time pressure to publish for tenure or to gain teaching positions. Just as many of them simultaneously submit articles to journals in the hope of faster publication, so scholars are submitting book manuscripts to multiple university presses at the same time. The role of the editor becomes that of a negotiator when a manuscript is acquired by the press for publication, but then has to be returned to the author when a more attractive offer or an earlier publishing date from another, more prestigious press is offered on the same manuscript. This causes enormous costs in time, labor, and credibility of the press. In the past, university book presses have not generally accepted multiple submissions, but the question was posed to university press

acquisitions editors about whether the standard is changing to mirror the practices of scholarly journals in some fields and to remain competitive in securing the best scholarship (Topkis, 1985, p. 80; Parsons, 1985, p. 74-76).

Acquisitions editors have many in-house responsibilities: they must act as information resources for their books, advise on potential markets and sales plans, and oversee the preparation of jacket copy. They see that schedules are adhered to, and they must be managers and promoters within the press. Editors are also expected to be mindful of the costs of publishing a book, and must make decisions on copy editing, design, and marketing schemes accordingly (Topkis, 1985, p. 82). An acquisitions editor needs to consider aggressive, sophisticated, targeted, and cost-effective marketing since the pressure to behave as a market-driven enterprise is increasing. No one knows the product better than the press' own staff. Thus the editors must think more like marketing professionals (Wood, 1997, p. 218-21).

## Marketing Obligations

In 1949, William Miller, in *The Book Industry: A Report of the Public Library Inquiry,* acknowledged the growing importance within university presses of the mass market, with its concentration on best-sellers and close ties to book clubs, inexpensive reprints, and movie producers (Adams, 2001, p. 46). Today, Adams claims, some acquisitions editors at university presses tend to only consider marketing trends in the decision to publish, thus behaving like commercial presses (2001, p. 49).

William Dowling's thoughts on the crisis in scholarly publishing include survey results at Penn State University Press which assert, "According to the survey of our authors, the deciding factor when they do buy a book is 'the reputation of the author.' If

faculty members are required to publish books to gain tenure, how will they manage to do so if presses can no longer afford to issue books by unknown authors that are likely to sell only a few hundred copies?" (34). Most books that attain modest levels of marketing success are those that appeal to a wide audience.

The major difference between trade books on one hand and textbooks and scholarly books on the other is the amount of investment required to publish the scholarly work and textbooks (Horowitz, 1991, p. 100). Once a manuscript is under consideration, an editor determines the group of scholars who will be attracted to the book, the adoption possibilities in university classes, the quality of the writing, the work involved in publishing it, and the manuscript's intellectual contribution to a certain area of study (Powell, 1985, p. 76). Although there is a risk in publishing scholarly manuscripts, Marsh Jeanneret, former director of the University of Toronto Press, stresses the importance of scholarly publishing: "The scholarly press' function is to produce works which may not be published elsewhere. It must be able to investigate which of such manuscripts are likely to be most valuable to the scholars for whom they have been written, it must prepare them for publication and produce them in appropriate editions and runs, and it has the further duty of ensuring that they are brought to the attention of potential users throughout the academic world . . . " (100).

Computer-based marketing programs assist in bringing books to the attention of potential users. However, scholarly publishing acquisitions editors have little marketing guidance from these computer-based marketing programs, except to obtain a sense of potential interest of the number of scholars interested in a work from a particular field of study. However, university press editors do have an advantage over trade publishers who

are able to use these elaborate and expensive marketing programs. University presses are able to track the sales patterns for a similar book or a previous edition of the same book because they print them in a smaller quantity than commercial presses (Horowitz, 1991, p. 106). Horowitz further explains the distinction between marketing trade and scholarly books. People read scholarly books, he says, to keep up with their field and maintain a professional reputation, but they read trade books because marketing sparked an interest in a book outside their professional field. Demand is created; the marketing of a trade book is in part out of stimulation of interest, while the marketing of a scholarly book utilizes an already existing interest (165). Because of limited funds available to university presses, promotional and advertising budgets could become the key component in what is significant publishing for university presses and their commitment to a certain area of publishing. What is aggressively promoted will constitute what is important to the press and central to the negotiations between editors and authors (Horowitz, 1991, p. 108-09). Harvard press director William Sisler rejoices at the extra attention university presses are receiving these days, evidenced by stronger sales and an increase in book reviews in the consumer press (Baker, 1998, p. 38).

# CHAPTER 2
# RESEARCH PROCEDURES

## Methods

This study serves as a foundation to examine the transformation of the role of acquisitions editors within university presses. The various factors that contribute to the transforming role of acquisitions editors are examined through personal interviews of twenty-nine acquisitions editors from university presses across the country. Twenty-two questions are presented to the editors within the context of editorial responsibilities, book marketing, electronic publishing, education and job training, and author/editor relationships.

The role of acquisitions editors is so closely linked to the scholarly publishing industry as a whole that each step in the manuscript process, from acquisition of manuscripts to publication of books, is evaluated in this study to determine the specific duties of acquisitions editors. This study, however, concentrates on the evolving role of acquisitions editors and variables such as library acquisitions, financial stability, electronic publishing, and professorial tenure that affect changes in scholarly publishing.

The interviews used to conduct this study with university press acquisitions editors took place at the Organization of American Historians' annual meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, as they fit into the individual editor's schedule. The interview questions (see Appendix A) discuss each editor's role within acquisitions, and the variables that might contribute to their changing role in acquisitions. Joyce Harrison, the

senior acquisitions editor at the University of Tennessee Press, reviewed the interview questions to check accuracy of phrasing and relevancy of topics. She made suggestions for revisions as well as verified the list of editors chosen for interviews. I applied for and received approval for work on human subjects through the College of Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee in April 2003.

The interviews were taped and estimated to last 30 to 45 minutes each. When transcribed, the interviews averaged six to seven single spaced pages. Before meeting the editors, I contacted the interviewees via e-mail to introduce myself, to inform them of the project and its design, to arrange an interview time and location if they were interested, and to obtain permission for the audio taping. Additionally, during breaks in my interview schedule, I walked around the book exhibits and talked to other acquisitions editors. The time during the conference sessions was hassle-free for the editors, who were undisturbed by the historians attending the conference. That was a time for me to interview those whom I did not contact because they were not scheduled to be in attendance or they did not respond to my e-mail. Once the interviews were transcribed, I sent each editor his transcript to review and revise as he deemed necessary.

## Participants

The Association of American University Presses membership list identifies 120 university presses in the United States and in Canada who meet the qualifications for membership. The presses must publish five or more scholarly works per year; they must have a committee or board of the faculty that endorses the scholarly quality of the peer-reviewed books; and each press must have at least three full-time employees, including a full-time director who reports to the university president or to someone having both fiscal

and academic authority. For the purposes of this study, a minimum of 20 percent of the total number of university presses registered with the American Association of University Presses are used as participants (n= 24). This number facilitates a large enough range of acquisitions editors at these presses to gather a broad sample of every type of press. In order to obtain at least 24 interviews, I contacted numerous university presses who sent editors to the Organization of American Historians annual meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, April 3-6, 2003.

University presses are divided into three categories, depending on their size: small, mid and large. Joyce Harrison recommends the definition that small presses publish between 5 and 50 new titles per year, mid-size presses 50 to 100 new titles, and large presses more than 100 new titles per year. Based on these categorizations, at least eight acquisitions editors were chosen from small, mid and large presses. A wide range of press sizes within the small, mid, and large categories were included to gain a broad perspective on the role of the acquisitions editor today.

A possibility during the interview process was gathering a larger sample of interviews in each size category than initially planned. If additional interviews occurred, then they would be included in the research data in the same manner as initially planned. However, the number of editors in each category may not be equal in number. Any interview that exceeded the eighth in each category would only serve to add, support, or challenge themes that arose out of the interviews; therefore, each category did not need to have the same amount of interviews. Fortunately, there was little deviation in the number of interviews in each category, nine in the small and mid size categories and eleven in the large category, so the amount of information remained fairly equal in each category.

The acquisitions editors who were interviewed at the OAH conference include:

Small Presses

Karl Kageff—Southern Illinois University Press

Barbara Hanrahan—University of Notre Dame Press

Cynthia Miller—University of Pittsburgh Press

Gillian Berchowitz—Ohio University Press

Heather Miller—Ohio State University Press

Lawrence Malley—University of Arkansas Press

John "Zig" Zeigler—University Press of Kentucky

Nancy Jackson—University Press of Kansas

Sandy Crooms—University Press of Colorado

Mid-Size Presses

Craig Gill—University Press of Mississippi

David Holtby—University of New Mexico Press

Robert Lockhart—University of Pennsylvania Press

Daniel "J.J." Ross—University of Alabama Press

Sylvia Frank Rodrigue—Louisiana State University Press

Meredith Morris-Babb—University Press of Florida

Clair Willcox—University of Missouri Press

Derek Krissoff—University of Georgia Press

Melanie Halkias—Rutgers University Press

Large Presses

Sheryl Englund—Cornell University Press

Elizabeth Demers—University of Nebraska Press

Bob Sloan—Indiana University Press

Monica McCormick—University of California Press

Joan Catapano—University of Illinois Press

Doug Mitchell—University of Chicago Press

Joyce Seltzer—Harvard University Press

Robert J. Brugger—The Johns Hopkins University Press

Brigitta van Rheinbe—Princeton University Press

David Perry—University of North Carolina Press

Frank Smith—Cambridge University Press

## Data Analysis

This is a qualitative study. I was interested in learning about the acquisitions editor's role within university publishing through their anecdotes and responses to interview questions. Each editor's experience was unique, but I discovered how the role of acquisitions editors continues to change as university publishing evolves. In order to study the interviews, each one was transcribed and analyzed for content themes while taking into consideration that presses of different sizes may operate differently. I expected to discover that electronic technology and the types of books published are changing the way editors acquire and analyze manuscripts from a marketing perspective; however, many other acquisitions responsibilities seem to have minimally evolved over the last three decades.

## Discussion

Five of the acquisitions editors on this list were presented with the idea of my thesis when I was conceiving a topic. Joyce Harrison sent an e-mail to various editors, and a couple of them suggested this topic. They know of my interest in university publishing and will most likely be willing to discuss their experiences, to an extent. Since acquisitions editors tend to guard their acquisitions practices carefully, the interview questions are designed in a sensitive manner. The business of acquiring manuscripts is competitive and could potentially impede their answers to the questions. This is a possible limitation to the study.

I am also limited by the university presses represented at the conference. University presses with small history lists or with wounded budgets did not attend, thereby reducing the range of presses surveyed. However, I believe the number and type of presses attending the conference is representative of the industry as a whole.

# CHAPTER 3
# THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Through a series of interviews conducted with 29 acquisitions editors in scholarly publishing, themes evolved concerning education and entry into the industry, variables affecting the business of scholarly publishing and the various roles of acquisitions editors, and the financial limitations editors must consider when acquiring manuscripts. The interviewed editors varied amount of experience in scholarly publishing, 10 editors with 10 or fewer years of experience, offering unexpected insight into how university presses continue to evolve as the market for scholarly books expands in one way and contracts in another. This seeming paradox is in fact appropriate in describing the market for scholarly books because as narrow, limited subjects are slowly losing an audience larger than the niche of scholars interested in the subject, monographs with broad, general subjects are gaining popularity not only among scholars, but also among a general audience of curious lay readers.

The editors were asked a series of questions intended to elicit a conversation in which they were comfortable conveying the scope of responsibilities in their acquisitions position. The questions were intended to guide the conversation; however, the editors' direction of thought and contemplation equally shaped the focus of the interviews. Surprisingly, most interviews touched on all of the themes intended to be discussed whether the interview was in a strict question/answer format or a natural conversation. The topics of education and experience initiated the interviews so that the editors would feel comfortable with the purpose of the interview by sharing information about their

backgrounds. The questions that followed delved into the intricacies of their responsibilities and the nature of scholarly publishing.

## Education and Preparation

The interviewed editors entered the business of scholarly publishing by various routes of training and education. The purpose for including interview questions pertaining to education is to determine if there is a more favorable method of training acquisitions editors. Do editors who recently entered scholarly publishing have additional expertise than those entering the industry in past decades by preparing according to the current trends of the industry? The experience of each editor is also important in determining whether an alternate career provides added dexterity other editors may not possess.

### Education

Because editors work with scholars and their research, the editors' educational experience becomes a greater qualification than other editors in commercial publishing. The editors state that they must be viewed as knowledgeable and competent in the subject area or areas in which they acquire; therefore, 79% of the editors interviewed have either a master's or doctoral degree in those fields of study. Eighteen editors assert they believe their graduate degree has helped them in their career as they discuss various topics and manuscripts with scholars. The reasons why graduate degrees are so important are that editors have read more peripheral topics surrounding their subject of study while in school, have contacts in their given field, know the interests and priorities of scholars, have a greater degree of credibility, and can offer comments on scholarship that amount to peer critique.

Five editors believe a graduate degree would be helpful but is not necessary to successfully fulfill their responsibilities so long as they stay updated with developments and new scholars in the specific fields in which they acquire. It is important to note that some editors who were interviewed acquire only in history, while others acquire in many different subjects areas. Gillian Berchowitz, Ohio University Press, comments, "At small publishing houses you find that you acquire in areas that you might not necessarily be an expert. And many acquisitions editors have a very tiny, a very wide but skinny knowledge of things." Editors in this position state they must constantly read about current trends in scholarly research within their acquisitions areas. One editor without a graduate degree remarks that he uses other books in the field as a model for successful research instead of a graduate education.

Of the 23 editors who have a graduate degree in a specific subject area, 22 pursued a career in teaching but found the profession too saturated with other professionals searching for the same teaching jobs. They have discovered that scholarly publishing offers a combination of ideas and scholarship in addition to a business operation, making it a better option for them than teaching. It is an opportunity for these scholars to stay engaged with intellectual ideas while working with manuscripts instead of students. Zig Zeigler, formerly of the University Press of Kentucky, comments, "I found scholarly publishing very attractive because I was working with ideas. I found it was much more satisfying to work with adults who were working on books, and they were truly interested in the ideas." Robert Lockhart, editor at the University of Pennsylvania Press, states that scholarly acquisitions is a great profession because it combines his intellectual interests with the structure of a business job.

**Professional Experience**

Those editors who have more years of experience trained for an acquisitions' position as copy editors or in a position with other departments, such as marketing, advertising or production. Four editors worked in sales for commercial textbook companies before moving to a scholarly press. Of the editors interviewed, 66% began their careers in this manner. The younger editors with less experience and entered scholarly publishing in the last 10 years chose internships, formal publishing programs, and assistantships with established acquisitions editors as a means for training. Three of the younger editors entered scholarly publishing through scholarly journal editing.

The main difference between the two options of training involves direct verses indirect instruction on the duties of acquisitions. The younger editors learned the responsibilities directly from professionals through a formalized publishing program or from a senior acquisitions editor. While the direct training may have benefited the younger editors in that they learned acquisitions much faster, the more experienced editors comment that they received balanced, comprehensive training by learning various roles within scholarly publishing. Every interviewed editor stated that on-the-job training, as an acquisitions assistant, a copy editor, or an employee in another department, is the most important preparation for acquiring manuscripts.

As well as on-the-job training, several editors say features of their education offer valuable learning experiences that are not available in the press environment. Cynthia Miller, director of the University of Pittsburgh Press, discusses her graduate educational experience at Duke:

> They started an oral history program where students were taught to interview and take good notes. One of the exercises my history professor Larry Goodwin put us through was to assign different theses. We had to read it and say as much as we could about the author in their writing, where the author was coming from, what their politics and philosophy were. He said, "You go into interviews like that, you go into everything like that." That actually has proven to be very helpful in assessing manuscripts. I didn't realize at the time that was training I would use in publishing, but it worked out that way.

Robert Brugger of The Johns Hopkins University Press discusses his graduate education instructor, David Donald, who forces his students to write with clear, concise word choice and organization. Brugger emulates Donald's editing practices when reviewing manuscripts. He says, "I've always seen myself as an historian who edits rather than an editor playing with history. In my case being an editor is a lot like editing graduate work. Even though they have Ph.D.s, they're still finishing something that I can help them do. Or they're advanced, but I can talk to them about their work in what amounts to peer review or peer commentary." While on-the-job training is mentioned as the most valuable experience for a person entering scholarly publishing, one's educational experience also provides editing skills and a model for evaluating scholarship.

**Acquisition Skills**

David Perry, University of North Carolina Press, says, "The acquisitions editors are the most active in a press, moving around between departments, advocating for their books. And then on the outside, they represent the press. They're the people that are the face of the press to the authors." An acquisitions editor must be versatile and relate well with all kinds of people, from co-workers to scholars. It is important that he understands all facets of the publishing process in order to sell the book to his colleagues as well as help the marketing department sell it to the public. In addition to the image of the book,

the editor must also be concerned with the image of the press to the author. Sylvia Frank Rodrigue of Louisiana State University Press asserts that acquisitions editors need to be primarily concerned with an author's reaction to the press. An author can stay positively inclined to the press, even when his manuscript is rejected. The editors note that many times the author whose manuscript is rejected will return with another manuscript that is a better fit for the press, or he will recommend the press to another author based on his positive experience.

Representing the press, book, and author well are a few of the essential skills and characteristics of a successful acquisitions editor mentioned in the interviews. Each editor's comments vary from business, marketing, and financial skills to communication skills. There are a variety of answers, but all offer valuable insight into the diverse responsibilities acquisitions editors posses on a daily basis. Some of the skills and characteristics required for success include adaptability as trends in subject fields shift, confidence in communicating with potential authors about a project, extensive knowledge in acquired subject fields, ability to read critically and synthesize the ideas with speed, and understanding what the press can offer to the author. The editors also suggest that one must be able to develop ideas into generalized books that will reach the broadest audience, acknowledging the important financial component of publishing. Cynthia Miller, University of Pittsburgh Press, emphasizes that even if money were not an issue, there is no point in publishing books that nobody wants to read. Therefore, an editor has to have a sense of what scholars and the general public is interested in reading.

In addition to reaching the broadest audience with each book, the acquisitions editors repeatedly mention shaping the list of books in each subject area to contain

renowned names and pioneering research. Meredith Morris-Babb, University Press of Florida, emphasizes, "A good acquisitions editor should be able to craft a program and not just acquire whatever manuscript comes in or talk to whoever is interested. He or she should actually select particular subject areas and pursue them; create a publishing program and gain a reputation for the press in those areas." According Morris-Babb, the health of the press depends of the editor's ability to shape his lists.

**Special Training**

In as much as electronic publishing and financial obstacles have fueled debate among those within all areas of scholarly publishing, the acquisitions editors also hold varying opinions on these issues. The questions pertaining to finance and technology are framed in three different approaches, two of which will be discussed in this section. The editors were asked to answer questions about their training related to electronic publishing and finance before entering the industry as well as any current training that might be helpful in adapting to the constant flux of technology and business.

Most of the editors did not have any specific training in publishing, even specifically relating to finance and electronic publishing, before entering scholarly publishing, except for 2 editors who more recently studied in a specific publishing degree program. The other editors state an internship program and on-the-job experience are and always have been the best training in publishing before or upon entering the industry. Nine editors held other positions outside of publishing, such as textbook sales, marketing, investment banking, and fundraising before beginning a career in scholarly publishing. They all agree that the preparation in business from those experiences allowed them to easily adjust to the financial obstacles now present in scholarly publishing. The other

editors entered the industry directly after finishing their graduate degree, and 38% of those editors believe that business training would be helpful for responsibilities relating to business and finance.

The editors say they do not think there is any educational training that would prepare them for acquiring electronic publications because they state that acquisitions is not currently affected by electronic publishing to the point that their job description needs to change and will not be for some time. Elements of electronic publishing, such as publishing e-books or digital books, are still in trial stages, with complex dilemmas yet to be resolved. They reiterate the point that database use, print-on-demand publishing, email correspondence, and manuscript submission formats are considered electronic technology, not electronic publishing, and are mostly learned through the daily routines of acquisitions.

Acquisitions editors, however, are always faced with variance in their specific subject fields and trends in scholarly publishing as a whole. As a result, each editor mentions methods for staying abreast in the industry. For example, the American Association of University Presses' annual meeting hosts classes on current topics of interest to acquisitions editors as a way to communicate with other editors and hear advice on certain topics. Additionally, editors may meet internally to discuss previous sales patterns and future goals as a means for evaluating financial changes. Most editors mention that reading any pertinent information on trends in specific subject fields and the industry as a whole, especially scholarly journals and studies done by the American Association of University Presses, is the best way to gather current information.

## An Editor's Varying Roles

Acquisitions editors are jacks of all trades. They are the liaisons between presses and authors, as well as coordinators for the book between the differing departments within the presses. The editors' responsibilities include acquiring and commissioning manuscripts from potential authors, keeping the publishing process on a timeline, coordinating the contract between the press and the author, locating scholarly reviewers for manuscripts, suggesting ideas for the marketing and design of the book, interacting with editorial board members, and building the reputation of the press by acquiring worthy scholarship with a broad readership. An acquisitions editor possesses a large amount of responsibility for the success of the press, which Elizabeth Demers of the University of Nebraska Press supports, "You also have a whole organization full of people that . . . you're working with to create this product, this book. Even though everyone is involved, I think organizationally because the acquisitions editor brings in the projects and is an advocate for them there is somehow a sense of more accountability."

### Evolution of an Editor's Techniques

An editor within the first 5 years of acquiring manuscripts acquires with differing techniques than a seasoned editor with many years of experience. Scholars are not just the only people who must have an honorable reputation; acquisitions editors must also build a reputation for their press and themselves. They represent the press, thus taking on a level of respect based on the reputation of their press. An editor, to a degree, can control the reputation of the press in specific subject areas by building a list of books with top scholarship and widely recognized authors. One press may have an honored reputation in Southwestern cultural studies but not in World War II scholarship, while

another press may be recognized for its theology list. The acquisitions editor is mostly responsible for this recognition. Joyce Seltzer, Harvard University Press, recognizes that the press name attracts scholars, who will then build their own reputation by publishing with presses of distinguished repute.

Editors at varying stages in their careers must use differing techniques of acquiring manuscripts. A beginning editor has not built what editors refer to as a "network" of scholars to guide and suggest worthy scholarship. That editor begins by contacting scholars without distinguished reputations who are working on revised dissertations or first books. Beginning acquisitions editors usually find these scholars in conference agendas or scholarly journals. They must then build relationships with scholars in their subject fields to gain trust and respect from those scholars. Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, discusses the ideal career path of acquisitions editors:

> The best thing for any acquisitions editor I suppose is to acquire books that are the work of senior people. You start out with revised dissertations and after a few years, you're mostly publishing associate professors. In a few more years, you're publishing full professors who are world renowned and whose books sell in the tens of thousands.

As editors acquire manuscripts from top scholars, their reputation as well as the press' grows to attract a greater number of books that sell well. At the same time this process of events occurs, an editor's network of scholar advisors grows.

Every editor mentions the importance of having a broad network of potential authors and scholarly advisers at some point in their interview. A network involves scholars who have previously published with the press, have built a relationship with the

editor, serve as consultants in pursuing potential authors, have agreed to review a manuscript to evaluate the merit of the scholarship, or perhaps all of the above. Sylvia Frank-Rodrigue, Louisiana State University Press, comments on their value:

> When I first started, I spent a lot of time writing letters to people whose names were on the programs and trying to meet with them. But as my contacts have grown, and as I'm becoming more well known among the different professors and their students, I find that's a better way for me to acquire manuscripts. I know what the quality is going to be. I suggest getting to know prize winners and who write excellent books. That will turn you on to others who do the same.

Meredith Morris-Babb, University Press of Florida, uses her networks because the fields in which she works are exploding with new authors and avenues of scholarship much faster than she can keep up with them along with all her other responsibilities. She must depend on her network to offer advice and direction.

As an editor's network grows, his techniques for acquiring manuscripts change. Not all editors, however, attribute the change to their developing network. Many believe experience and familiarity with the business allow for an evolution in their acquiring practices, if a transformation occurs at all. Sixty-nine percent of the editors concur that their methods have evolved over time; 17% believe they have not changed, and 14% say it is too early in their career to see a change. The editors who acknowledge a variation in their methods mention numerous ways not pertaining to networks in which their acquisitions procedures have evolved. They make decisions on manuscripts faster and spend less time with those that will not work for the press. They spend less time chasing after projects or publishing unsolicited projects but instead commission books with expert scholars. Over time, they gain the luxury of choosing exciting and fresh scholarship, not taking everything that comes to them.

The editors who believe their methods have not evolved, as well as all the other editors, acknowledge that the mode of acquiring manuscripts did change with the installation of email. Instead of calling authors or writing letters as previously occurred, editors are able to stay in contact with authors with much more ease and efficiency. Although methods evolve as an editor's career progresses and every editor uses his own personality and style when building relationships with authors, the underlying elements of acquiring manuscripts are universal. Barbara Hanrahan, University of Notre Dame Press, asserts:

> It seems to me that the ways in which I work as an acquisitions editor have not changed that much over the years. I still need to talk to people about their work; I still need to read proposals and manuscripts and readers' reports with the same sets of concerns I had twenty years ago. I still need to negotiate a contract successfully, and I still need to communicate effectively important information about a book project to my colleagues in other departments.

At the core of each editor's responsibilities, at any stage in his career, lies the mission for a complete, successful published book.

**Effective Acquiring Practices**

Every editor uses his own style in acquiring books, much of which depends on personality. There are, however, certain tools that editors use to attract scholars to publish with their press, what they might call their own secrets of the trade. Collectively, the editor's tools fall into general categories. Four editors believe a network of scholars to use as a resource for acquiring the top scholarship in the field is an effective tool in acquiring manuscripts. As mentioned earlier, a network of authors helps with the job load and offers leads to the right manuscripts for the press, so the editor does not waste time chasing books that will not fit into the press' particular list.

Building a subject list with reputable scholarship is another effective method for acquiring manuscripts. Authors know the names of worthy acquisitions editors who publish successful books. Karl Kageff, Southern Illinois University Press, attests to this fact, "The most effective tool is having a strong list in an area because people know you for that list; they respect you. They want to publish with you. Some of the presses here are known in certain areas of history, and the best scholars in the field want to publish with them. Easily, the most valuable tool is a strong reputation." Joan Catapono at the University of Illinois Press also discusses the important role of having a respectable list, as well as having a good publishing record. She says, "If you start with a good list in an area that the author is publishing in, you have a leg up. Basically knowing the discipline and being able to talk intelligently with the author and then proving that your press is able to publish books successfully, which includes all areas like production, copy editing, and marketing of the book, will give the editor an advantage."

Catapono mentions building relationships with authors as another effective tool editors use in acquiring books. That might mean finding something in common with the author to build a personal relationship of trust and friendship in addition to forming a working relationship. Honesty, sincerity, and persuasion that a book will do very well and fit very comfortably at the press, according to Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, are key components in working relationships with authors. He continues, "If a book is not a fit with us, I have to tell them right away. If I think it may fit or it would fit if it were revised, then I have to be persuasive. All the way through I have to be sincere about my interest in the project and my hope for its success." He says that it is easy to run into trouble with a project that gains his enthusiasm, but with which

his colleagues or the faculty board do not agree. Then he must go back to the author and explain the situation with sincerity. Many times, he says, he will give the author another idea of where to send the manuscript or even personally call other presses to look at the manuscript.

Sincerity and honesty also affect the author/editor relationship when an editor must reject a proposed manuscript. Sylvia Frank Rodrigue, Louisiana State University Press, explains the importance of continuing a relationship with the author for future manuscripts or suggestions about potential authors, "I think an acquisitions editor needs to be primarily concerned with the authors and with their reaction to the press. You can keep somebody positively inclined toward your press, even when rejecting."

**Cultivating Author Relations**

Building relationships with authors is essential for acquiring manuscripts. Many editors mention this facet of their job as the most important component of acquiring top scholarship and to publish a scholar's second, third or fourth book. How do editors cultivate these relationships? The three most common answers to this question are through personal, face-to-face contact at meetings and while visiting scholars on their campuses, keeping contact with the scholars through telephone calls and email, and developing relationships with the foundation of trust, honesty, and politeness. Fifty-six percent of the editors mention each of these components in a successful author/editor relationship.

Although any form of contact is beneficial in a relationship, and most of the time email and the telephone are the most convenient and realistic, most editors mention personal contact as the most efficient method of building a solid working relationship and

possibly a friendship with the author. There are several ways to make personal contact with the author. Visiting scholars on campuses and conferences were the most commonly mentioned means of personal contact. Part of that personal contact is being very honest and fulfilling agreements with the author. Cynthia Miller, University of Pittsburgh Press, expounds on this idea,

> I think that one of the worst things an acquiring editor can do is offer a promise and then not live up to that. If you say you can publish books in ten months, you better be able to publish books in ten months or something close to it. In using people for referrals and with references to new authors, you want them to go to the potential author and say, "Yes, she did exactly what she said she was going to do."

On the other hand, according to Sheryl Englund of Cornell University Press, it is possible for an editor to become too comfortable in a friendship with an author to the point that discussion of any business material becomes uncomfortable. She says the editor has to be able to say to an author, "This is something we can't do for you." It is important to keep the author happy but realistic at the same time.

David Holtby, University of New Mexico Press, points out that he recently pursued a book that fit the press perfectly; however, he had previously rejected another manuscript by the same academic. According to Holtby, she had been so impressed by the process at the press that although she published the first with another very good university press, she felt her second book would work wonderfully with Holtby and his press. He stresses that even when rejecting a book proposal, it is important to be frank and honest with an author through letters, over the telephone or on email. Although the contact may not be face-to-face, Daniel Ross, University of Alabama Press, indicates the importance of communication throughout the entire publishing process. He explains how

to foster author relationships, "While the book is being published you have to stay in touch. 'This is what we plan to do. This is what is coming next.' And then after the book is published, check in. 'I saw a good review of your book yesterday in the *Journal of American History*. Weren't you glad to see it? We sure were. By the way, what are you working on now?'" Of all of these forms of contact, communication and sincerity are vitally important in building and maintaining relationships with authors. The objective is to make the authors feel comfortable working with a particular press and acquisitions editor as well as sending other scholars to that same press.

The editor also plays an important role in the acquisitions process as an agent between the author and the press; the acquisitions editor not only represents the needs and desires of the author, but he also represents the business of the press. Within the press, the editor must be able to sell the manuscript to colleagues and sell the press to the scholar. Therefore, the editor must speak two different languages, one of business and one of scholarship. Monica McCormick, University of California Press, describes this dichotomy:

> I would say the role that I play in the process is really a go-between. I need to understand the author and the book thoroughly. I need to be able to explain, describe, and sell it to my colleagues. If I can't do both those things well, I'm not good at my job. I have to be able to talk to scholars; I have to be able to talk to marketing salesmen and understand the both of their points of view and make sure they understand each other. So I'm the conduit. I'm the person through which it all passes.

**Marketing and Design Input**

With the goal of accommodating the author's requests while simultaneously coordinating the best interests of the press, the acquisitions editor frequently fills a liaison position between the author and the marketing and design divisions. The editors agree

that since they have the background knowledge of the manuscript as well as an understanding of the author's desires for the appearance and marketing of the book, they do have influence on the marketing and design of the book. Editors in smaller presses mention that they have greater influence in these areas on a daily, consistent basis, since they have direct access by walking down the hall and speaking to either department. Editors in larger presses have influence but to a lesser degree and must use formal meetings to discuss their opinions and the author's desires. Only one editor mentions that he did not have any influence pertaining to marketing and design for reasons of personal preference.

Once an editor acquires a manuscript, he becomes the book's manager within the press. Gillian Berchowitz, Ohio University Press, comments on the importance of an acquisitions editor's involvement in the entire process of publication: "You should be as informed as you can be in the marketing of the book because you might think that your author is getting ads in journals and they might not be. You need to know all of the books that are going to be displayed at conferences. You need to have tabs on things because you're the promise maker." The importance of the acquisitions editor's role is to facilitate the best interest of the press while satisfying the author's requests. Sylvia Frank-Rodrigue, Louisiana State University Press, comments, "I like to get author's input because it makes a big difference in their field of overall satisfaction with the press and the outcome of their book."

The acquisitions editors do not have complete control over the marketing and design of a book; most make suggestions on the type of advertising and the art used on the cover. Because the suggestions may or may not be taken, many editors stress the

importance of pitching the project and giving as much background information to their colleagues as possible. If, perchance, the cover design does not fit the theme of the book or the artwork is inappropriate for the book, the editor does have the power to alter the original design. And at most presses the author has the opportunity to approve the cover of his book, another occasion for the press to contribute to the satisfaction of the author. In discussing the role an acquisitions editor plays in the marketing and design of the book, 44% of the authors mention their role as a negotiator or liaison between the press and the author.

**Copy and Developmental Editing**

An editor's role in facilitating the book through the publishing process also includes the development of the manuscript into the final book form. Most editors choose not to involve themselves in the development and copy editing of the manuscript. The scholars have a greater knowledge of the subject and material contained in the book, unless an editor has studied in the particular field in which he is acquiring. For that reason, editors usually offer comments on the structure or order of the chapters, where to cut or expand an argument, but not on the content. Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, mentions that with his expertise in history, he is able to offer comments on the manuscript that amount to peer critique, but he does not attempt to shape or rewrite the manuscript. Karl Kageff, Southern Illinois University Press, also mentions his scholarly background and the credibility it gives him when helping authors shape their manuscripts according to scholarly standards.

The main reason editors cite against heavy developmental editing involves the amount of time it would require for the manuscript to undergo extensive editing of this fashion. Clair Wilcox, University of Missouri Press, says:

> We rarely have enough time to spend time working hand in hand with an author though an entire manuscript. What we will do is send them the manuscript and make suggestions based on our readings. Most of our authors are experienced enough that they know what to do with our suggestions. I also often use expert reviewers to back it up and that gives me additional credibility with my authors.

Most editors mention they will edit a couple of the chapters and the introduction, offer general suggestions on their reading of those chapters, and then expect the author to implement those suggestions into the rest of the book. Each manuscript must undergo a scholarly review process in which scholars in that field evaluate the scholarship for relevancy and accuracy. The peer reviewers will send reports on the strengths of the scholarship as well as improvements. Most editors use these reports as the basis for revisions if they do not have an educated background in the field.

Scholarly books, however, are not the only type of book published by university presses. In the case of regional and general trade books, an editor may spend more time developing the content of the manuscript. Cynthia Miller, University of Pittsburgh Press, discusses her role as an editor of regional books, "I'm not always working with professional authors; I'm working with people with a great idea and knowledge of some area, but they don't necessarily know how to put a book together. Some of those manuscripts require a lot of developmental editing." Again, with the time involved in developmental editing there is not enough time for an editor to personally shape every manuscript, so he must choose the ones that require the most assistance.

Clair Wilcox, University of Missouri Press, mentions a second type of developmental editing that he and many other editors practice called commissioning. The concept behind commissioning a book is to develop an idea for a manuscript and then search for the right scholar to write the book. By commissioning books, editors are able to shape their lists with the scholarship that will give them and their press credible reputations among scholars. Bob Sloan, Indiana University Press, explains:

> Your list is not going to come to you. You need to be able to go out and get the books you need. You want to commission books. And that's really where you want to be (it's also where the fun is). You don't want to be reacting to things all the time; you want to approach an author and say, "I have this great idea for a book." And then try to engage them in a discussion in hopes that they'll write the book, and if not, suggest somebody else who might be willing to do it.

Nancy Jackson of the University Press of Kansas mentions a disadvantage of this type of acquisition practice as being the time period between the formation of an idea and the published book. The progression of idea to published book can take years, she says, which means the press will not be making money on the commissioned book and the reputation of the list will also take that much time to grow.

As far as the copy editing of a manuscript is concerned, most presses have separate divisions with what they call manuscript editors to handle the copy editing procedures. Most of the copy editing is free-lanced with the manuscript editors in charge of directing the copy editors in how the manuscript should be edited. According to some acquisitions editors, that direction comes directly from them as they will line edit one chapter as an example of how the entire manuscript should be copy edited. Only 4 acquisitions editors mention that they have any direct involvement in copy editing the

manuscript, and they do so because of their initial training in copy editing upon entering the industry.

**An Acquisitions Editor's Autonomy**

The editors mention that the editorial, copy editing, marketing, design, technology and publicity divisions in the press must collaborate and communicate routinely in order for the book to be published and marketed successfully. Acquisitions editors offer input into all of these areas of the book's development, but how much independence and autonomy do the editors have when acquiring manuscripts? They offer varying opinions on the amount of autonomy they posses within their role of acquiring manuscripts and the benefits of both collaboration and autonomy. Fifty-six percent of the editors believe they possess principal responsibility in choosing manuscripts to be published, while 44% acknowledge other influences that contribute to the decisions they make.

University presses differ from trade publishers with regard to an editorial board made up of professors at the respective university. The board's purpose is to approve the manuscripts chosen by acquisitions editors on the basis of worthy scholarship and financial vitality. The board has the option to reject or approve the proposed book, or to send it through another stage of revisions by the author. Acquisitions editors not only pitch the project to their colleagues in marketing and design, they must also persuade the board of its merit and advantages to the press. Editors must ultimately gain approval from the board in order for their manuscripts to be published, so no editor has complete autonomy.

The editors mention a variety of environments in which they work and ways they interact with their colleagues and supervisors. The editors' supervisor or acquisitions

colleagues may influence decisions on manuscripts, creating less autonomy for the editors. Many times editors who are learning their press' lists and the types of manuscripts that fit best at the press will have to be accountable to someone in authority, such as a director or managing editor. One scenario Clair Wilcox, University of Missouri Press, discusses describes a partnership between himself and another acquisitions editor where one does not have veto power over the other. He says:

> I am fairly free to make decisions autonomously. However, I'm aware of what the press' goals are and what the financial situation is, so I'm not inclined to do anything outrageous to harm the press. At our press, there are only two of us who acquire books, so we talk to each other on a daily basis. There is a lot of communication. I see her correspondence; she sees my correspondence. I don't think autonomy comes into play; it's a team effort, and I really don't have problems with that.

Heather Miller, Ohio State University Press, works closely with her director when making assessments of manuscripts. She comments:

> I have a lot of autonomy about subject matter, but ultimately I will tell my director that I want to publish this book and he'll say, "OK, why?" If I can make a good case for him, then he's very supportive. All the manuscripts he has told me he doesn't want me to publish ultimately made sense. It was just that I was naïve at the time or was too ambitious in the kinds of books we can do.

Editors who claim they have principle authority when acquiring manuscripts also stress the importance of working with the other departments in the press to gather information pertaining to sales, advertising, and manuscript editing. Gillian Berchowitz, Ohio University Press, offers insight into her role of information gathering, "In all of our meetings we listen very carefully to what marketing says which books sell which books don't. One looks at sales figures and you talk to the business manager. A good acquisitions editor gets as much information from as many sources. There is no point at

all in cutting yourself off from information." Monica McComick, University of California Press, also comments on the importance of every stage working together for the success of the book:

> From one day to the next, I have an enormous amount of autonomy. My list is clearly defined, and I'm to figure out how best to decide what to do. So as I make decisions one manuscript at a time, usually I do that on my own based on my own assessment of the work. I don't have people looking over my shoulder and second guessing me. But if I want to really an effective editor, I need to work and communicate with a lot of colleagues really well. So there is a certain amount of autonomy that helps me, and then there's a certain amount of collegiality that I just need to have.

An editor has the autonomy relating to his particular list as far as building its backlist and reputations, but he does not have control of the direction of the press as far as which subject areas to pursue. The editors mentioned that they are the best person for deciding on manuscripts because they are aware of and research academic trends and upcoming scholars within their particular list. They are the ones closest to the subject matter and know it best. The acquisitions editors normally rely heavily on the scholarly reviews of each manuscript for publishing decisions and revisions.

## Financial Limitations: Monograph in Crisis?

The manuscripts that acquisitions editors present to their colleagues and the editorial board are now categorized by how much profit each will make; thus, the editors' autonomous decisions are tied to financial obligations. Research that captures an audience of limited numbers, considered a traditional monograph, is slowly fading, while the definition and audience of the monograph broadens.

**The Mission of Scholarly Publishing**

Historically, the mission of scholarly publishing has been to publish the best scholarship available, no matter the amount of revenue it returns. During the eras of the Cold War and space exploration, universities received grants from the government for the purpose of publishing research that would contribute to these affairs. At the same time, research in all areas of study was benefiting from the influx of money by the government; however, the Cold War ended and the space researchers achieved their goal of landing on the moon, so the money abated. Without this funding, presses could not publish every sort of manuscript that crossed their desk as they were now accountable for the profits of their books. Most editors now evaluate a manuscript based on the number of books it will potentially sell, but Joan Catapono of the University of Illinois Press holds to the traditional view of scholarly publishing. She relates the mission of her press, "We exist to publish the best scholarship out there. We're not a business; we're a unit of the university. We're not there to make money. We prefer not to lose money, but our mission is to publish important, cutting-edge scholarship."

There is much debate within scholarly publishing over the definition of a monograph. Nancy Jackson, University Press of Kansas, defines the monograph as a "single author, defined subject" book. However, a book by a single author with a defined subject can reach a very broad audience based on the relevancy and appeal of the topic, so the traditional view of a monograph appealing to a small number of scholars will not hold true in this case. All editors affirm their mission is to publish the best scholarship available on any topic, only now financial concerns present a variable that was

nonexistent 20 years ago. Monica McCormick, University of California Press, comments that when she was first at the press her director would say, "If you bring in a book that is in a field that we publish well and it is a good book, you have outside readers that tell you this is excellent scholarship in the field, we will find a way to publish it." That, she said, was 15 years ago and the press once had enough financial support to publish every good work of scholarship no matter what the market would support. If it was really good scholarship, the libraries would buy enough copies to cover the costs of publishing the book. Now, however, library acquisitions have shrunk dramatically, she says, so acquisitions editors have to consider how the book can reach a larger audience.

The core of scholarly presses is to publish the best scholarship in the given areas a press chooses to concentrate their efforts. Still the concern of staying financial viable leads some presses to change the subject areas in which they publish. Robert Lockhart, University of Pennsylvania Press, discusses how his press moved into a more lucrative area of publishing:

> For a long time Penn was your typical university press. We did only monographs and very academic subjects like medieval studies and anthropology. As university press publishing has changed and as the university's support for the press has decreased, we've moved into fields with a broader potential readership like American history. I was the first American history editor hired at the press in its hundred year history. This was to gain a foothold in a wider market so that we could be more self-sustaining. In a lot of ways business, sales, and business needs have pushed the press in a different direction.

Changing the direction of the press as far as concentrating on lists that will make the most money while phasing out the subject lists that traditionally lose money is one solution to the financial crisis scholarly presses now face. Traditionally, lists concerning issues in

the humanities, such as poetry, fiction, literary criticism, have not sold enough copies to recover publishing costs.

A second solution corresponds with the two-fold mission of scholarly presses. It is to serve the constituents of the university and people of the state by publishing books on the region aimed at the general reader. These books tend to be more successful since they are written about interests of the people of the region. Bob Sloan, Indiana University Press, discusses a very successful book written for the public when the university had basketball teams that were winning the NCAA championship. The press would collaborate with the local newspapers to create a book about the winning season, which would sell very well to the general public. At the same time, these regional books are not just about generating revenue, Sloan went on to say, they are also about preserving part of the history, literature, art, music and culture of the region.

The financial concerns that have seeped into scholarly publishing over the last 20 years with library sales declining and decreasing university funding, could be substantial evidence that the mission of university press publishing has changed. Eighty-two percent of the editors, however, claim that the mission of the press has not changed in spite of these variables affecting finances. What has changed is the way in which editors keep a financially healthy press. A third solution to the financial dilemma concerning monographs is to keep a balanced list in each academic area with the traditional monograph and trade books or course adoption books. Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, expands on this point:

> I've always thought it was very important not just to publish stuff that tells a handful of specialists what Charlie Brown has learned about something or thinks about something, but try to publish books that most anyone who

> reads *The New York Times* headlines can pick up and learn from. It's about spreading the word and making what research reveals open to the kind of people that make up the largest possible audience.

The editors stress the solution to financial concerns is not to one day begin publishing more numbers of titles, since there is a minimum cost that has to be recovered for publishing each book and the press' budget must be expanded incrementally, but to choose wisely books that will reach the widest possible audience and therefore sell the most copies. Meredith Morris-Babb, University Press of Florida, comments:

> I've always been a firm believer that if the scholarship is good, the academy will support it by purchasing it. If you're publishing very a narrow slice of scholarship, what I call a pin prick in the fabric of history, then the academy probably isn't going to support it. That's not to say that it's not an important book, but it also doesn't speak to a larger audience. Therefore, does it really serve the academy?

Increasingly, editors acquire only manuscripts that will reach scholars in several different fields of research or perhaps will be annually adopted into college classrooms across the country.

**University Support**

In the past, most university presses received a subsidy from the university. The rationale behind the university's support for their press is the joint mission between the two institutions. The university produces the research, while the university press makes it available to other scholars and to the public. The problem with a subsidy from a public university is that the university is funded by the state. If the state develops financial difficulties, then the funding to the university decreases, which then trickles down to the university presses. Therefore, while 19 of 28 university presses receive subsidy from the

university, it is declining or the presses are moving away from university support to become self-sufficient.

The presses that are not aided by the university have various ways to recover the costs of publishing. Princeton University Press, for example, owns the building from which they operate and draws from an endowment every year. Other presses, through the work of the acquisitions editor, obtain direct subsidies for individual books that require extra money for publishing. The Indiana University Press developed a program called "Friends of the Press" which allows individuals to contribute charitable money as book backers. Some acquisitions editors also apply for federal grants in their areas of strength. The Indiana University Press, for example, achieved large federal grants in the areas of music publishing and Jewish studies, fields in which they have published for a long time.

Regardless of whether the press is self-supporting or seeing a decline in the subsidies, acquisitions editors are affected by the financial concerns when making decisions about which manuscripts to publish. Because certain presses receive subsidies from the university, those editors can potentially publish a few narrow monographs that will not sell more than 500 copies. This number, according to the editors, typically will not recover the costs of publishing the book, but with the subsidy, there is money to put into the book. Nancy Jackson, University Press of Kansas, comments, "If we were [to be] self-supporting, I would say that a quarter to a third of the books that I now acquire, I wouldn't. They don't lose huge amounts of money but they lose a little." Other editors comment that if their press was required to be self-supporting, they could not publish manuscripts solely based on merit; they would have to publish only what promises to return a profit.

Six editors mention they are not affected by a university subsidy or lack of it; they always seek to acquire manuscripts that will reach the broadest possible audience, and allow those to bring in revenue for the press. Regardless of whether an editor acknowledges the financial pressure, it usually is in conflict with the mission of the press. Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, discusses the discord between the mission to make the best scholarship available to the public while making money. At times, the mission prevails above financial concerns. He says:

> Albertus Magnus' *De Animalibus*, one of the greatest works of medieval natural history, was translated from the Greek and Latin. It was unavailable until a couple of years ago in any language except German . . . because the German translation from the seventeenth century was incomplete. A couple of guys decided to go back to the original Latin and to do *De Animalibus* all over again; we had NEH money for it. We did it in two hardcover volumes, no jacket, and I think it's a monument to scholarly publication [because] it represents scholarly achievement. We thought every university library in the world had to have a copy of this. I don't know what that number would be, but we've probably sold 600 copies. It's still something that was heavily worth doing and it will remain in use for generations, even though it was a money-losing proposition.

**Monograph in Decline?**

With the financial dilemma facing acquisitions editors, the most effective solution identified by the editors is to acquire a balanced list of traditional monographs and trade books. This solution lends one to believe that a percentage of monographs are being replaced by trade books. The acquisitions editors have varying opinions on whether the traditional monograph and revised dissertation are in fact being replaced. With the university tenure track designed the way it is, scholars must publish a book in order to receive a tenured position at a university. Most of the time recent graduates looking for a teaching position will attempt to publish their dissertation, after revision, in order to

present themselves as attractive candidates. The dissertations, however, normally do not sell as many copies as an advanced scholar's manuscript because young authors' names are not recognized and their research is assumed to be not as valid as the senior scholar's. The solution it seems, as with every monograph, is to edit carefully to shape the manuscript into a book or series of articles that will interest and apply to the broadest possible audience. Barbara Hanrahan, University of Notre Dame Press, touches on the role acquisitions editors possess in the tenure dilemma facing recent graduates:

> Until the scholarly community comes up with a completely different plan to reward scholars with tenure and promotion, the old system is still in place. In order to succeed, scholars have to publish. They don't publish with trade houses; they publish with university presses. That's our obligation; that's why we're there. It's to take what they do and turn it into carefully edited, reasonably well designed, presentable, durable books that then become part of the knowledge base of that field.

She asserts that the monograph and revised dissertations are not diminishing; they are changing.

Thirty-eight percent of the editors believe that publication of traditional monographs and revised dissertations have decreased. David Holtby, University of New Mexico Press, thinks this decrease is real, but he recognizes their importance at his press, "We do a lot of books that start as dissertations, but what has been the payoff for publishing them is that in many cases people have gone off and become very important in the field. And their circle of friends and their students come to us to have their manuscripts published. It's not everybody's model, but in my experience publishing dissertations has worked well, if you choose well in the beginning." One reason for this decrease in the traditional monograph is that in the same way university presses are receiving lower subsidies from the university, so are the university libraries that use the

money to buy books. University presses used to count on libraries to systematically purchase a copy of every book in their catalogue every season. With that money coming from the libraries, the presses did not have to count on the public buying the book to break even on the publishing costs. If scholars and the public did purchase the book, the press would generate revenue. Now, the reverse is true. Presses count on the scholars and general public to buy the book in order to break even.

Nancy Jackson, University Press of Kansas, relates how her press views the revised dissertation and the monograph:

> When I say monograph, I mean that fairly broadly. We have a book that we published last year called *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*, which has sold almost 10,000 copies. By some definitions that's not a monograph, but it's a clearly tight subject. Monographs are our bread and butter. They always have been and I suspect they always will be. Dissertations: I would say we publish fewer now than we once did because we can now acquire more experienced authors. When we were a smaller press with a less glorious reputation, we frequently published dissertations.

Editors are searching for engaging, relevant manuscripts that appeal to the nonspecialist, nonacademic audience, which most of the time narrow monographs and dissertations do not. Brigitta van Rheinberg, Princeton University Press, speaks on the change her press is experiencing with monographs:

> It would be difficult now to publish some of the books Princeton published 20 years ago because of the simple fact that libraries no longer buy several hundred copies. While Princeton is still publishing as many revised dissertations or monographs, the fact is that the nature of these dissertations has changed in that we now tend to pick the broader ones that promise to speak to several academic audiences.

Gillian Berchowitz, Ohio University Press, spends much of her time at academic meetings trying to convince scholars to use as many monographs in their teaching as

possible because that is the only way, she says, to keep them attractive as potential manuscripts and books for the general public. She believes acquisitions editors possess a large responsibility in the process of reviving the attraction to monographs:

> I think that one of the roles of the acquisitions editor is to be able to guide someone in creating and developing a book that will be engaging and interesting to read and have relevance in this time. There's an old publishing truism, you write a dissertation for people who know much more than you and then you write a book for people who know much less than you do.

On the other hand, 34% of the editors believe monographs and revised dissertations have increased and 28% believe they have stayed the same. The reasons they cite for this stability are associated with the fact that university presses are publishing more books now then they were 20 years ago. There are also many more potential university professors who are trying to publish their dissertations, adding pressure for more to be published. The editors note that the percentage of revised dissertations may have decreased in relation to the other types of books now being published, but the actual number has increased. Craig Gill, University Press of Mississippi, expands on this idea:

> In my thirteen years in publishing, people have been talking about the decline in scholarly monograph every single year, and it has yet to happen. The balance may have changed in any given press: maybe one press is doing more trade and one press is doing more scholarly. I think on the whole, things have more or less stayed the same. At Mississippi, we've increased the number of titles we publish, both trade and scholarly.

## Factors Affecting Acquisitions Editors

Acquisitions editors consider how they can shape the academic lists for the good of the press in order to keep the press financially healthy. They evaluate which scholarly monographs will impact the greatest number of people and which trade books will offer a

return with the smallest risk. As the editors daily judge manuscripts, other issues enter the decision making process, such as electronic publishing and multiple submissions, a manuscript that has simultaneously been offered to other presses. Editors are always competing for the best scholarship, even if it means promising a swift review and decision on a manuscript or an advance to authors writing a potential best-seller. When considering all the factors that affect decisions on manuscripts, the editors keep the best interests of the press in mind. Electronic publishing, trade book publishing, multiple submissions all carry risks that editors must take into account. Sometimes taking risks reaps dividends and sometimes not.

**Trade Publishing**

In addition to traditional monographs, university presses publish trade books with regional appeal and general trade books on national topics that would attract readers across the country. Part of the mission of university presses is to publish books that serve the citizens of their particular region. These books often relate the surrounding culture, including books on hiking, cooking, nature, people, or local communities. University presses have an advantage in regional trade publishing: they know the area and the people better than the large commercial presses in large cities and the have a direct access when marketing a book. Zig Zeigler, formerly of the University Press of Kentucky, relates how regional trade books fit best with university presses:

> There is only one university press in Kentucky, so if anybody is going to do a book on Red River Gorge or if anybody's going to do book on the rare plants of Kentucky and be able to exploit their advantages, it's us. So we can do a better job in publishing a book about Kentucky than Knopf or Random House can do. We've got all of the local outlets that we can get in touch with. So we're locally strong in Kentucky.

Zeigler continues by examining the mission of the press, "Part of what the press is there for is to serve a population that would otherwise not have any voice, and that's the local Kentuckians. There aren't going to be that many people from the New York publishers that are going to come to Kentucky and say, 'Tell me your story.'" Clair Wilcox, University of Missouri Press, comments on the contribution of his press to the people of Missouri, "We do a little series called *The Missouri Heritage Reader* Series, which is not scholarship. These are popular titles originally intended to teach adults to read, but we found they could be popular among schools, schoolteachers, and schoolchildren, high school and elementary. This series, which is about historical topics from the state, does very well." Both presses contribute to the interests and welfare of the citizens in their respective states.

Acquisitions editors are always aware of the local residents' interests and the strengths of the scholarship at the university. Meredith Morris-Babb, University Press of Florida, explains:

> I think it just make a lot of common sense because you work with a body of scholars, for instance archaeologists, and part of what the archaeologists want to do, because it helps them receive funding, is to get information out about their projects. People in general are interested in bones and dirt and pots and things like that, so if you have the expert, the person who knows more about Appalachian archaeology than anyone else, with an audience who is ready to read about it, why not put the two of them together? We have all these experts here and there is a vehicle by which the public can be made aware of this stuff. It's like public history, public information, public service announcements within two covers.

Regional books also offer financial advantages. These books are always relevant to the local area and they do not change or become outdated as may occur with monographs presenting new research constantly filtering through academe. Regional

books are consistent good sellers. Monica McCormick, University of California Press, comments that regional books are fun to publish because they are often on topics people are passionate about, the particular region. They are a demonstration of how the press connects to the place and they give people a connection to where they live. They can also bring attention to the press, she continues. She describes a successful book that received rave reviews: "I had a book this year that was a book on a legal issue before the Supreme Court, and the *New York Times* wrote an editorial about my author's book. It was just really funny that they endorsed our book on the editorial page. That was a kick to open my paper that day." Because of that review in the *New York Times* and others like it, the press' reputation grew, their name became more recognizable, and as a result, the top scholars choose to publish their monographs with the press.

The most cited reasons for publishing regional trade books as well as general trade books are they make up for lost revenue and give the press financial viability (74%), they are a service to the citizens of the state and part of the mission of the press (56%), they provide an outlet for the press to connect to the region (41%), the editors enjoy publishing them (22%), and they bring publicity to the press (22%).

Although there are numerous advantages with trade publishing, there are also numerous risks. Sheryl Englund, Cornell University Press, very often commissions trade books. Any time she commissions a project, she must offer a monetary advance to the author. She and Bob Sloan, Indiana University Press, agree that if the press is not financially healthy, there is little money to offer in advances. Englund also points out that regional trade books require more time in developmental editing. Trade books are always expensive to produce and market. Most of the time, they contain pictures and

illustrations, which add to the cost of the book. Trade books require extensive marketing, whether on a regional or national level. The marketing department must find the right channel in which to market and make sure the book is reviewed so it catches the public's attention.

Because presses invest large amounts of time and money in a trade book, and if the book fails, it is a huge loss. Elizabeth Demers, University of Nebraska Press, acquires trade books and recognizes the advantages of a balanced list with trade books and monographs, but elaborates on the gamble of trade books, "Trade books are very risky, and they have a shorter shelf life. There is no guarantee whether you can get people to buy them."

**Electronic Publishing**

Technology affects in a large way the entire process of books published by university presses, including copy editing on a computer, communicating to authors via email, marketing the books online, storing book information in databases, and designing the jacket on computers. The editors admit that their correspondence with authors and the process of publishing a book are much more effective with the technological advances that have become common in publishing. David Holtby, University of New Mexico Press, affirms the advantages using technology during the publishing process, "We have done studies that show we've saved a quarter of a million dollars in the last three or four years by doing things electronically, just the incredible amount of labor that is no longer required."

Holtby continues to explain how technology contributes to acquiring successful manuscripts and maintaining a cordial relationship with current authors while giving them a voice throughout the process of publishing their book. He relates his story:

> I now have had manuscripts come in where I met the author literally online. One was a journalist in Mexico who sent his columns to scholars in modern Mexico. One of our faculty members received and referred them to me saying, "You know, this guy really knows what he is doing. He has lived in Mexico for about ten years and he has some good points of contact." So I began writing to him. We then gathered his columns; he rewrote them, and we published them and sold about 10,000 copies of the book. But that was my first complete internet acquisition; I've never met the man.

Holtby continues to describe how technology connects the author to the press by keeping him involved in the publications process:

> We now share with our authors every jacket and cover design that we do. Previously we had to make choices because we had to mail them out. Now we give them a secure website address where only the authors can go and look at their jacket. We can have 4 to 6 samples; we can do it as much as they want. And the author can check them instantly, no matter where they are. And our authors, like most presses, are everywhere. Previously it often took one to two weeks. And if you had feedback, the process started all over again. Now they give us feedback, and later in the day, they can go back to the site and corrections are made. I think it's so much more satisfactory for everybody.

Recent technological advances also contribute to the successful marketing of a book using the press' website. A press can send emails announcing the publication of a new book that directs scholars to their website. Once the scholars find the advertisement, they can decide if they are interested in purchasing the book directly from the site. It is essentially free advertising. Sheryl Englund, Cornell University Press, relates how the acquisitions department is helping to make the marketing department more electronic: "I have a book coming out soon that's a cultural history of sound in early America, and

we're going to be putting some sounds on the website as a marketing tool." She also describes a book marketed on the press' website with related links, "I always have to think ahead to the marketing and how we're going to market the book. Some books just have obvious marketing capacity that would be effective over the internet. Like the book *Aliens in America:* we had a great time with that. It's linked to conspiracy theory websites."

The attitude on electronic publishing, placing entire books in electronic format and making them available via computers, from the editors in this 2003 survey is mostly negative, as they convey that experiments with electronic publishing have, for the most part, been unsuccessful since there is no way to regulate the selling of electronic books. Robert Brugger, The Johns Hopkins University Press, expresses his concerns for electronic publication even though his press is a forerunner in electronic publications experimentation:

> We are doing I'd say more and more electronic book publication and exploring possibilities in electronic publishing. There are a lot of unknowns in that field. I find it hard to know how much time people want to spend on the screen looking at a book manuscript or a book-length piece of work. How are the finances going to work out? Who pays for it? Does the user? Does the general public?

Gillian Berchowitz, Ohio University Press, also conveys her wariness of electronic publishing while praising technology in publishing, "We do very little by way of CD ROMs or add-ons or this or that. We have found those to be very risky. I have very low expectations of many electronic projects. The mechanics of electronic publishing are magnificent and with us to stay, and they'll evolve and evolve, but the mechanics of distribution and marketing electronically have absolutely not worked out."

The mechanics of electronic publishing Berchowitz refers to include technology throughout the publishing process as well as programs involving print-on-demand and electronic archiving. Presses are able to keep digital records and complete copies of current books and books on the backlist in a database, essentially creating a digital archive of all the books published by the press. Many presses are working to create these archives in the event that electronic book publishing becomes the preference over paper copies. Net Library is program that 27% of the editors say their press uses. It allows a press to place their digital archives of books on the web for people to purchase. This program is still in its experimental stages, and editors have not decided if it will be successful now or in the future.

Thirty-six percent of the editors interviewed say their presses use a print-on-demand program to keep books in print that will not sell many copies in a year. The print-on-demand technology allows presses to reprint books in digital format on an as-needed basis. Cynthia Miller, University of Pittsburgh Press, discusses how her press benefits from this program offered through the distributor at the University of Chicago Press, "For us to keep books in print by offset printing, you almost need to sell 200 a year before it even makes sense. With print-on-demand, if we sell 25 a year, we can make it work. It's allowing us to keep books in print a lot longer."

Many of the larger presses with additional money to experiment in electronic publishing have had moderate success with their projects. Editors at other, smaller presses do not want to spend the money on electronic projects if they are going to fail. Elizabeth Demers, University of Nebraska Press, conveys the attitude of her press: "As far as full-scale electronic publishing, there were a lot of experiments with it industry

wide in the '90s, and none of them were successful at all. I think we're just waiting in general in the industry for technology or something to come along to make electronic publishing more feasible."

The presses that are experimenting with electronic publishing have done so with large-scale projects as well as small additions to the books in print. Heather Miller, Ohio State University Press, relates how her press is testing interest in electronic formats on a small scale:

> I don't think anybody at our press thinks people are going to be reading books online anytime soon, so we have not done that. It's been mostly in terms of reprinting. We just tried an experiment where a whole season of books we put on CD. It's a cheap $10 CD we burn in-house and no cover. It's just information for those who want to read it in that format. If they have the appropriate browser, they can do text searches and those kinds of things. We've decided to continue doing that, and it seems to be going really well.

To a greater extreme, presses are experimenting with complete electronic formats of books, projects that would display digital information better in an electronic format than on paper. Monica McCormick, University of California Press, explains one scholar's idea for an electronic book:

> I have an author who is a political historian and has a huge amount of data on changes in the racial composition of Los Angeles over time. He has numerous maps that need to be in five or six different colors, which would be extremely expensive to print. They also change over time, so to see them actually moving, it would be much more effective to do it electronically. He is interested in the physical changes in the neighborhoods as well . . . Somebody at some point in Los Angeles drew every block of the city, and there are hand drawings of every street, or at least a huge number of them. He can show the old streets and then on top of them electronically impose images of what it looks like now. And in some cases there is a freeway over what used to be a house. We can't publish those drawings with overlays printed on top of each other because of the printing expenses. So this project works really well electronically.

Robert Brugger also describes a project in the conceptualization stages at The Johns Hopkins University Press:

> We've just started work on what will be a reference book on the history of technology—not an encyclopedia, but a book that will demonstrate how technology and culture represent a closed loop, one affecting the other. We're trying to get some fresh essays that will get people thinking about how to teach and treat the mystery of technology. Now that's going to be a book project, but we want it to evolve into an electronic publication. On the Web it would develop indefinitely in terms of additional information and illustrations and hypertext links so that it would a dense and phenomenal project.

When the editors were questioned about the effects electronic publishing has on the way they acquire manuscripts, only one editor said that he thinks about manuscripts as potential electronic books from the initial stages. The other editors say that electronic publishing is not effective enough in its present capacity to affect their methods for acquiring manuscripts, such as seeking projects that would be published solely in electronic format or developing a book to fit both an electronic format and a print format. They do admit that they might do so in the future if interest in electronic books increases and standards are set for access to these books. Fifty percent of the editors declare that electronic publishing and technology do not affect the way they acquire manuscripts, while 45% of the editors state electronic technology does affect their mode of acquisitions, such as email correspondence and electronic delivery of manuscripts. Whether or not electronic publishing is a publishing mode for the future is yet to be determined; however, as Berchwitz explains, the mechanics of digital publishing are here to stay.

**Multiple Submissions**

The pressures young scholars face to secure a job and gain tenure forces some to submit their manuscripts to several different presses at once with the hope that at least one press will be interested in publishing their book. The reasoning behind this practice involves the amount of time required for a press to first decide if they are interested in the manuscript; second, send it to scholarly reviewers who will evaluate its merit and scholarship; and third, make a decision to offer a contract based on the peer reviews. If a young scholar has a certain publishing deadline to meet for tenure, he cannot wait eight weeks for a decision, possibly receive a rejection and then have to begin the process again. Eight weeks is the fastest time mentioned by editors in providing a publishing decision for scholars, and that is when they are extremely interested in the manuscript.

From the perspective of acquisitions editors, multiple submissions are difficult to accommodate and not usually healthy for the industry of scholarly publishing. Eleven percent of the editors say that they will not accept multiple submissions; they prefer to have exclusive rights to the manuscript while making a decision to publish or not. Sylvia Frank-Rodrigue, Louisiana State University Press, does not accept multiple submissions for book manuscripts. She explains:

> We don't feel that it's necessarily fair to take up another press' time and our press' time for a manuscript that will go one way or another. If it's a first time author, they don't know which [press] they necessarily want, and I think that's part of the decision the author needs to make. It also seems like a waste of time going through the entire process: finding a reader, spending a couple months with the outside reader, paying the reader, the reader investing his time and effort and thought into this project and then making an offer and hearing, "Well, I've decided to go with this press." It's very frustrating.

Other reasons acquisitions editors cite for not accepting multiple submissions involve the limited resources university presses have with which to operate. If all of the university presses are using their resources to acquire the same manuscripts, they will eventually hurt themselves by competing against each other.

On the other hand, 89% of the editors agree to accept multiple submissions, and of those editors, 63% accept them with certain conditions while 37% allow manuscripts to be submitted simultaneously without stipulations. Of the editors who will allow multiple submissions with conditions, they usually only accept these manuscripts if they will be a perfect fit for the press. They might ask the author to limit the competition or agree to consider the press' offer. The manuscripts that presses compete for are those from the most senior scholars with a great potential to sell thousands of copies. Sometimes an editor will ask the author not to accept another press' offer until he has extended a competing one. Sheryl Englund, Cornell University Press, takes multiple submissions on a case by case basis, stating:

> It depends on how desirable the project is, and it depends on how reasonable I think the author is going to be . . . If it's somebody who I'm afraid is not going to give us time to complete a review process, we usually will not [accept] that manuscript. Somebody says, "I have three weeks, and all of you presses are going to race. Whoever makes the first contract offer, wins." We usually just get out of that kind of situation. But if I talk to the person and it seems as if we're one of the top choices and we're going to have time to complete the review, it doesn't really bother me to do it.

Zig Zeigler agrees to accept multiple submissions if he believes the manuscript will sell 4000-5000 copies. He continues:

> If Henry Kissenger came to me with a manuscript and said, "I want to submit it to North Carolina, Yale, and Cambridge at the same time," I'd

> say, "That's great. If you can get it to me, I can give you a publishing decision quickly." And then I would compete for all I'm worth. The kinds of things I use as competition would be personal attention and personal connections . . . University presses are competitive, but it's more like sibling rivalry. We're all in the same business, and if one of the university presses actually failed, it would hurt us all. We don't ever want something horrible to happen to any of the other university presses, but at the same, we want to win the best authors.

The editors who do not usually accept multiple submissions admit they accept multiple submissions as a bargaining chip for a manuscript that has the potential to sell very well or is a perfect fit for the press. These editors agree to accept the submission in the hope that the author will appreciate the press' treatment and allow that particular press to publish the book.

Other acquisitions editors permit authors to submit a manuscript to them as well as any other press they choose. All the editor asks is that he knows it is being reviewed at other presses. David Perry, University of North Carolina Press, explains his perspective:

> We recognize that the climate has changed for young scholars. Considering time tables, there are a lot of pressures on them to get into the job market, tenure, or promotion. These are driving some of their decisions. And quite frankly to be able to bring under review some of the better work, we have to agree to review it multiply or simultaneously with other presses. It's a potential drain on university press resources if we are all reviewing and investing in manuscripts that we then can't sign up, but this a fact of university press publishing. We have to be open to it.

"University presses have a wonderful consortium," says Sylvia Frank Rodrigue, "and we do try to work together." She stresses the importance of the mission of university press publishers in seeking out and publishing the best scholarship, even if it means competing in a friendly manner.

# Chapter 4
# Conclusions

Bob Sloan, Indiana University Press, summarizes the prevailing attitude of acquisitions editors with his final comments, "All of us want to be known by the books we publish, whether they are financially successful or not. If they are well-reviewed, if you feel that you've done a good book and made a difference, that's enough." Although financial concerns have crept into scholarly publishing over the last few decades, these editors hold fast to the mission of their presses in seeking out and publishing the best scholarship in any given field.

This study of acquisitions editors and scholarly publishing serves only as preliminary research and cannot comprehensively address every topic of interest relating to the changing role of acquisitions editors or the evolution of university press publishing. Because financial and electronic publishing trends in scholarly publishing are in constant flux, further evaluation of the role of acquisitions editors relating to those topics will be required. Other possibilities for future research:

- An in-depth study on regional and general trade books as a possible solution to the financial concerns of university presses
- An analysis of conglomerations of presses with a single owner, possibly a trade publisher, as a solution to financial concerns
- An analysis of salaries of acquisitions editors comparing to other staff members of university presses and acquisitions editors in trade publishing

This study did conclude that most acquisitions editors at university presses train as academics in any given field in order to help shape the literature of the field through the manuscripts they publish. Most of the interviewed editors have graduate degrees which they feel enhances their abilities to communicate with authors about scholarship, contributes to their knowledge of any given field, increases the number of scholars in their network and solidifies greater credibility with the authors. The main motive these acquisitions editors stated for entering the industry was the desire to stay connected to research and scholarship without attachment to a classroom. Most of the editors faced obstacles in attaining a teaching position upon completion of their Ph.D. program because of the number of scholars desiring to teach. Scholarly publishing, to them, was the next best, and according to some, better, alternative.

The skill and characteristics that shape a successful acquisitions editor involve adaptability as trends in subject fields shift, confidence in communicating with potential authors about a project, extensive knowledge in acquired subject fields, ability to read critically and synthesize the ideas with speed, and understanding what the press can offer to the author. These skills are not normally taught in a classroom, according to most editors, they are learned while debating over which manuscripts to publish and building relationships with scholars and authors. In other words, most skills acquisitions editors need are learned on-the-job. Only recently have courses and degrees commenced in universities for specific training in publishing. The classes offered by the American Association of University Presses do assist in keeping the editors updated on trends and issues in scholarly publishing.

Acquisitions editors gain experience over time and build networks of scholars who serve as consultants and guides in discovering the best scholarship and upcoming academics with worthy research, which the majority of editors claim is their most valuable and effective tool in acquiring manuscripts. The second most effective tool is building relationships with authors who will suggest other scholars and publish their second, third, or fourth book with the press. The most successful method to build these relationships, according to the editors, is communication. They prefer to make personal contact with the authors as much as possible, but if that is not realistic, email and the telephone are adequate modes of communication.

Within the press, acquisitions editors serve as the manager of each manuscript, pitching the project to the marketing and design colleagues once the manuscript is under contract so that it can be properly designed and marketed. The role of the editor is to serve as a conduit between the wishes of the author and the best interests of the press. An acquisitions editor has considerable influence on the marketing of the book since he knows the subject matter best and can suggest which journals in which to advertise and which scholarly meetings to display the book. In addition to affecting the design and marketing of a book, most editors shape the book to a limited degree with suggestions of organization or by commissioning a project. Joyce Seltzer, Harvard University Press, appraises the role of an acquisitions editor throughout the process of publishing a book: "The acquisitions editor in any publishing house is the critical person because without her, nothing else works. She is the one who has to bring in the substance of what everyone works on. Her tastes and her awareness of what people and the market would be

interested in is a great part of what determines how respected the press is and how well the books sell."

Acquisitions editors have a direct impact on the mission of the press, which is to publish the best scholarship and to represent the region of the university. However, current market and financial issues affect this mission and influence an acquisitions editor's publishing decision. As a solution to financial constraints, the subject matter of monographs is evolving to appeal to a wider, more general audience made up of scholars across several fields of study. These monographs are considered by editors to be the best scholarship and increase the revenue of the press. Brigitta van Rheinberg, Princeton University Press, relates her responsibilities as an acquisitions editor: "I help to shape fields and set trends by capturing the most exciting work on my list. The role of acquisitions editor has changed dramatically over the years from being very reactive to being very proactive, traveling to campuses all over the country to seek out the best scholars, commission books, and compete for the best scholarship."

Based on the insight provided by the acquisitions editors, three solutions to the current financial predicament involving decreasing subsidies from universities and declining library sales seem to be effective in recovering lost revenue. First, university presses and more specifically acquisitions editors are shaping lists in each subject area to include a combination of monographs and trade books. Second, monographs are shifting away from narrow, abstract topics to those that would appeal to undergraduate students as well as scholars in differing fields. Third, university presses are also shifting their lists to focus on more lucrative fields with broader audiences.

Electronic publishing, according to the editors, does not affect the manner in which they acquire manuscripts or scholarly publishing in general but acknowledge that it could in the future. The concerns of how to regulate the purchasing of electronic books and interest in reading these books have not been resolved and show no potential for resolution in the near future. Only a few presses are experimenting with the beginning stages electronic projects, so they have no records of success or failure. Electronic technology, including print-on-demand, digital formats of books, and email does pervade scholarly publishing and allows the publishing process to run more efficiently and effectively.

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# APPENDIX

Appendix A ~ Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time to answer questions about your position as an acquisitions editor. These questions are designed to explore your responsibilities and the methods you use in acquiring manuscripts, as well as the changes you perceived in this role since you entered the profession. The answers to your questions will be used in a thesis that explores the role of the acquisitions editor in university press publishing. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of these questions, you may say so and we will move to the next question. Additionally, if you would like the press or your identity to remain anonymous, let me know and I will accommodate your request.

The first few questions in this survey deal with the nature of your background and education before entering the scholarly publishing industry.

1. How and when did you begin your career in university press publishing?
2. What were your motives for entering scholarly publishing?
3. Did you receive any special training before entering your position as acquisitions editor? If yes, what was that training? If no, what training might have helped you?
4. What skills do you believe acquisitions editors must possess in order to successfully fulfill their role?
5. What, if any, special training might help you keep up with changes now taking place in the industry?

The next questions pertain to the university press as a business and your role within the company as an acquisitions editor.

6. What would you say are the objectives or is the mission of your university press? Have they changed since you began acquiring manuscripts for them? If so, how?
7. Is the press compelled to be self-supporting? Is it already self-supporting? Do subsidies affect your methods for acquiring manuscripts?
8. Have your methods for acquiring manuscripts changed since you began your career? If yes, in what ways?
9. Do you have input into the marketing and design of the book? If so, what is your input? Why?
10. What is the most important component of acquiring manuscripts?
11. In what ways has electronic technology been incorporated into the press?
12. Does electronic publishing contribute to the way you acquire manuscripts? If so, how? In what ways?
13. Are you ever involved with manuscript editing? If yes, in what ways? If no, who handles those responsibilities for you?
14. Has the number of scholarly monographs and dissertations your institution publishes increased or decreased since you began your career in publishing? In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this change?
15. In your opinion, what are the motivations behind acquiring regional titles and those with trade book appeal?
16. When making decisions on manuscripts to acquire, do you believe you make those decisions autonomously? Why or why not?

17. In what ways do you cultivate relations with your authors and readers?
18. What takes up the majority of your work time during any given day?
19. Many journals now accept multiple submissions because of increasing scholarly needs for promotion and tenure. Do you generally accept multiple manuscript submissions? Why or why not?
20. Do you have any final comments on your role as an acquisitions editor, or on changes you have seen in university press publishing since you began your profession?

The transcriptions of each interview are on file with the author.

# Vita

Emily Marie Garman was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on February 19, 1978, and grew up in Knoxville. She graduated with honors from Farragut High School in 1996, and the following fall, she enrolled in Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. As an undergraduate, she edited Carson-Newman's *Appalachian* yearbook, where she discovered her interest in publishing and editing. In 2000, she graduated cum laude with a B.A. in English literature and a secondary education teaching certificate.

After graduation, she spent a year in Atlanta, Georgia, teaching high school English and then moved to Branson, Missouri, to live with and mentor troubled teenagers.

In the fall of 2002, she entered the graduate program in the College of Communications at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in pursuit of a master's degree in communications with an emphasis in journalism. For the year of 2003, she was employed as a graduate assistant for the School of Journalism and Electronic Media and assisted in establishing a summer journalism program for high school students and coordinating the Tennessee High School Press Association.

Upon graduation, Ms. Garman plans to pursue a career in Christian publishing.